

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1246

AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T ATHENS 8735

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TGAS: PFOR, GR, TU, CY

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S ORAL MESSAGE TO BITSIOS

REF A) STATE 265887, B) STATE 265555

1. I MET PRIVATELY WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BITSIOS LAST NIGHT AND READ TO HIM VERBATIM THE SECRETARY'S ORAL MESSAGE CONTAINED REF B., HAVING DELETED THE PHRASE IN PARAGRAPH 6 IN ACCORDANCE WITH REF A. BITSIOS TOOK EXTENSIVE NOTES AND WHEN I FINISHED ASKED ME TO CONVEY HIS THANKS ONCE AGAIN TO THE SECRETARY FOR HIS CONTINUED INTEREST AND HELP.

2. BITSIOS SAID TO TELL THE SECRETARY THAT HIS MESSAGE WAS FULLY CONSISTENT WITH OTHER INFORMATION THAT HE (BITSIOS) HAD BEEN RECEIVING DIRECTLY FROM ANKARA AND THROUGH "OTHER FRIENDS." (WHICH I GATHERED INCLUDED AT LEAST THE BRITISH AND GERMANS, AND PERHAPS OTHERS AS WELL--BITSIOS DIDN'T WANT TO IDENTIFY THEM.) BITSIOS SAID THERE WERE SLIGHT DIFFERENCES IN SOME OF THE WORDS USED TO DESCRIBE THE PRESENT TURKISH POSITION AND PROPOSAL, BUT THAT THE ESSENCE WAS THE SAME IN ALL. HE SAID HE WAS NOT WORKING ON A MESSAGE TO MAKARIOS THAT WOULD SYNTHESIZE ALL OF THE INFORMATION, ANALYZE AND ASSESS IT, AND OUTLINE A SUGGESTED SET OF COUNTERPROPOSALS THAT THE GOG WOULD RECOMMEND THAT MAKARIOS AUTHORIZE THEM TO TRANSMIT TO THE TURKS

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3. BITSIOS SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THE SECRETARY SHOULD NOW "HOLD HIS

HAND" AND "MARK TIME", AT LEAST FOR THE REST OF THIS WEEK IN ORDER TO ALLOW THE GOG TIME TO WORK OUT AN AGREED POSITION WITH MAKARIOS. HE SAID THAT THE TRANSMISSION OF TOO MANY PROPOSALS AND IDEAS TO MAKARIOS MIGHT ONLY CONFUSE THE SITUATION AND PREVENT THE PROMPT FORMULATION OF A COORDINATED RESPONSE TO THE TURKS FROM THE GREEK SIDE. IN RESPONSE TO MY SPECIFIC QUESTION, BITSIOS SAID HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE ALL RIGHT FOR THE SECRETARY TO SEND A PERSONAL MESSAGE TO MAKARIOS SAYING THAT HE HAD RECEIVED AND STUDIED AMBASSADOR CRAWFORD'S REPORT OF THEIR RECENT CONVERSATION, THAT HE (THE SECRETARY WAS "RENEWING HIS EFFORTS TO TRY AND BRING THE TURKS CLOSER TO MAKARIOS' VIEWS," THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE ARCHBISHOP DID NOT WANT TO RESUME ACTIVE NEGOTIATIONS UNTIL AFTER THIS WEEK'S UN DEBATE, BUT THAT HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO RESUME THE INTERCOMMUNAL TALKS SOON THEREAFTER AND THAT HE WANTED TO REMAIN IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE ARCHBISHOP. THE IMPORTANT THING, BITSIOS SAID, WAS FOR THE SECRETARY NOT TO GET INTO THE SPECIFICIS OF THE TURKISH PROPOSAL. (BITSIOS SEEMED TO FEEL THAT MAKARIOS WOULD SEIZE ON NUANCES IN THE VARIOUS FORMULATIONS OF THE TURKISH POSITION IN A WAY THAT WOULD RETARD RAPID FORWARD MOVEMENT TOWARD NEGOTIATIONS AFTER THE UN DEBATE.)

4. BITSIOS SAID HE THOUGHT THE GOG SYNTHESIS, ANALYSIS AND SUGGESTED COUNTERPROPOSALS TO THE TURKS WOULD BE IN MAKARIOS' HANDS SOME TIME WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12. THEREAFTER THERE WOULD PROBABLY BE SOME CONSULTATIONS BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN ATHENS AND NICOSIA, FOLLOWING WHICH--PROBABLY EARLY IN THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 17, WHICH PRESUMABLY WOULD BE AFTER THE UN DEBATE ON CYPRUS""THE GREEK SIDE WOULD BE PREPARED TO TRANSMIT ITS "COUNTERPROPOSALS" TO ANKARA. BITSIOS SAID THAT HE HOPED TO PERSUADE MAKARIOS TO GO ALONG WITH THEIR SUGGESTIONS AND THAT HE FELT THEY WOULD PROBABLY ALSO BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE TURKS. BITSIOS DID NOT WANT TO REVEAL DETAILS ABOUT HIS ENVISAGED "COUNTERPROPOSALS" EXCEPT TO INDICATE THAT IN ACCEPTING SOME OF THE AGENDA FORMULATION BY THE TURKS, THE GREEKS WOULD WANT TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THEY DID NOT ALSO NECESSARILY ACCEPT THE CONCEPTS EMBODIED IN SUCH FORMULATIONS. (BY THIS I THINK HE MEANT THAT THE GREEK SIDE WOULD BE WILLING, FOR EXAMPLE, TO DISCUSS RPT DISCUSS A POSSIBLE BIZONAL FEDERATION AND A CENTRAL GOVERNMENT WITH LIMITED POWERS BUT THAT ANY ACCEPTANCE OF THESE AS CONCEPTS WOULD ALSO REQUIRE ACCEPTANCE BY THE TURKS OF SOME OF THE GREEK VIEWS ON QUESTIONS OF TERRITORY AND REFUGEES.) BITSIOS ALSO INDICATED

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CATED THAT THE POINT CONCERNING EQUAL PARTICIPATION OF THE TWO COMMUNITIES IN GOVERNMENT CONTINUED TO GIVE THE GREEK SIDE VERY SERIOUS PROBLEMS.

5. BITSIOS SAID THAT IT HAD NOT YET BEEN DECIDED HOW THE GREEK SIDE WOULD CONVEY ITS "COUNTER-PROPOSALS" TO ANKARA, IF THEY WERE READY NEXT WEEK AS ANTICIPATED. HE SAID THAT THE TURKS "SEEMED" TO PREFER THE GREEKS USING A DIRECT CHANNEL TO ANKARA WHICH WAS AVAILABLE TO

THEM. HOWEVER, BITSIOS WENT ON, HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE HIGHLY IMPORTANT TO HAVE THE ASSISTANCE OF THE SECRETARY AND PERHAPS OTHER INTERESTED THIRD COUNTRY ALLIES TO HELP PERSUADE THE TURKS TO ACCEPT THE GREEK COUNTER-PROPOSALS. HE SAID HE WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH US AGAIN ON THIS POINT SOME TIME NEXT WEEK AFTER THE GREEK RESPONSE TO THE TURKS HAD BEEN INTERNALLY AGREED.

6. I TOLD BITSIOS THAT AS HE WAS AWARE THE SECRETARY AND THE USG HAD BEEN--AS HE AND CARAMANLIS HAD EARLIER BEEN TOLD BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY WE WOULD--MAKING A MAJOR EFFORT TO TRY AND MOVE THE CYPRUS QUESTION FORWARD TOWARDS A NEGOTIATED AND ACCEPTABLE SETTLEMENT. SAID THAT VERY VIGOUROUS STEPS HAD BEEN TAKEN IN ANKARA AND THAT IN THE LIGHT OF THE DIFFICULT AND PAINFUL PERIOD IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH TURKEY THROUGH WHICH WE HAVE RECENTLY BEEN AND ARE NOW PASSING--IN PART AS A RESULT OF EARLIER GREEK ACTIONS--THE GOG SHOULD NOT OVERESTIMATE OUR ABILITY TO BE HELPFUL NOW WITH THE TURKS. BITSIOS SAID THAT I SOUNDED A LITTLE BIT LIKE MAKARIOS, THAT MAKARIOS WAS INSISTING THAT THE GOG HAD AN ENORMOUS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PRESENT SITUATION ON CYPRUS AS A RESULT OF THE PREVIOUS REGIME' STUPID ATTEMPT TO OVERTHROW HIM. BITSIOS SAID THAT IT CONTINUED TO BE THE GOG'S VIEW THAT THE USG COULD DO FAR MORE IN BRINGING THE TURKS TO A REASONABLE NEGOTIATING POSITION AND THAT IT WAS ALSO VERY MUCH IN THE INTEREST OF THE USG TO DO SO. WE CONTINUED IN THIS VEIN FOR A SHORT TIME, ALSO DISCUSSING THE COMPLEX AND DIFFICULT INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION IN TURKEY, BUT HE WOULD NOT AGREE THAT THE USG WAS DOING ALL IT COULD OR SHOULD WITH TURKEY ON THE CYPRUS QUESTION -- ALTHOUGH HE HAD NO SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS TO MAKE AS TO WHAT MORE WE COULD DO.

7. OUR MEETING ENDED WITH BITSIOS ASKING ME AGAIN TO TRANSMIT TO THE SECRETARY HIS CURRENT READING ON THE CYPRUS QUESTION, SAYING THAT HE INTENDED TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE SECRETARY AGAIN, PROBABLY DURING THE EARLY PART OF NEXT WEEK.

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